

# Habitat Project Proposal

**Proposal Title:** Willow Basin Fuels Treatment – Phase I

**Proposal Number:** 1164

**DWR Region:** Southeastern Region

**Lead Agency:** USFS

**County:** Grand

**Project Manager:** Barb Smith

**PM Phone:** 4356370041

**Regional Priority:** High

**Project Type:** Terrestrial Habitat

**Proposed Start Date:** 04/01/2008

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**Project Location:** Willow Basin is located on the north side of the La Sal Mountains, 20 miles east of Moab, above Castle Valley.

**Project Description:** Improve vegetative condition on 1000 acres of oak, pinyon/juniper and ponderosa pine habitat by mechanical thinning and prescribed burning.

**Description of Problem/Need:** Due to a long-term lack of disturbance across the oak, mountain brush and ponderosa pine communities, juniper and pinyon are increasing to the detriment of desirable wildlife and livestock forage species. The need for this project is to reduce existing live fuel loads, vertical and horizontal fuel continuity and ladder fuels within the Willow Basin WUI area.

Ponderosa pine stands with dense areas of closed canopy pinyon-juniper, Gambel oak and mountain shrub woodlands have proven susceptible to fast moving and intense fire due to live fuel layers (gambel oak and other shrub species) that have increased with lack of natural fire activity. The majority of this project is in an area where shrubs and ponderosa pine are common and representative of Fire Regime I and are in Condition Class 3; descriptive of an area of frequent historic fire return interval, with a significant departure from the historic condition, and a corresponding high risk of ecosystem damage as well as a serious risk to public safety attached to fires started or burning under extreme fuel and weather conditions. A risk of loss of key ecosystem components and high risk of damage to private property or interior improvements exists in Condition Class 3 lands. Therefore a need has been identified to implement practices that will reduce fuel hazard and associated fire risk in order to protect life, property and associated values within the WUI area.

Project activities would increase herbaceous forage production and availability, while not significantly reducing mast production. While some oak would be removed, larger trees and clumps would be retained. Where the competing pinyon/juniper overstory is removed, mast production should increase.

The project is adjacent to but not within a Focus Area. The area does include ponderosa pine and mountain shrub communities (CWCS key habitats) that would benefit from treatment.

**Objectives:**

- Reduce the risk of stand-replacing crown fire within the wildland-urban interface around Willow Basin private in-holdings (WUI area) which includes approximately 25 private homes and primary access routes.
- Improve habitat condition and diversity for wildlife, especially wild turkeys.
- In ponderosa pine habitat, thinning from below would increase the health and vigor of mature pines.
- Restore fire adapted ecosystems.

The expected outcome of this project would be to effect an immediate change in fire behavior, to reduce rate of spread and intensity, to maintain Condition Classes that support desirable fire behavior and that the wildland-urban interface within the project area would be less susceptible to excessive damage from wildfire. Also, firefighters, public and private users and developments adjacent to the project area would have a reduced risk of adverse affects from wildfire.

**Relevance to Strategic Plans:** The proposed action has been reviewed for compliance with the Forest Plan [Manti-La Sal National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA Forest Service 1986, with amendments)]. Proposed activities meet the goals and management direction provided by the Forest Plan.

**Potential Risks:** Catastrophic fire

**Proposed Methods:** After NEPA and vegetation prescriptions are complete, the project would be implemented when local USFS crews are available. The District fire crew has several seasonal and permanent personnel who would be available for this project. The District also has a Bobcat and Fecon head which would be utilized. Chainsaw/hand thinning would also be accomplished with the local crew.

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**Shapefile Name:** WillowBasinFuelsTreatment83.shp

**Seed Source:** n/a

**UPCD Reg Team Coord Date:**

**Proposed NEPA Action:**

**Proposed Arch Action:**

☒ **Vegetation Monitoring**    ☐ **Wildlife Monitoring**

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**Monitoring Details:** Photo points would be established

**Cons. Outreach  
Details:**

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## SPECIES BENEFITING

Rio Grande Wild Turkey	Mule Deer	Black Bear	Lewis's Woodpecker
Band-tailed Pigeon			

## LAND OWNERSHIP

Owner	Acres
USFS	1000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>

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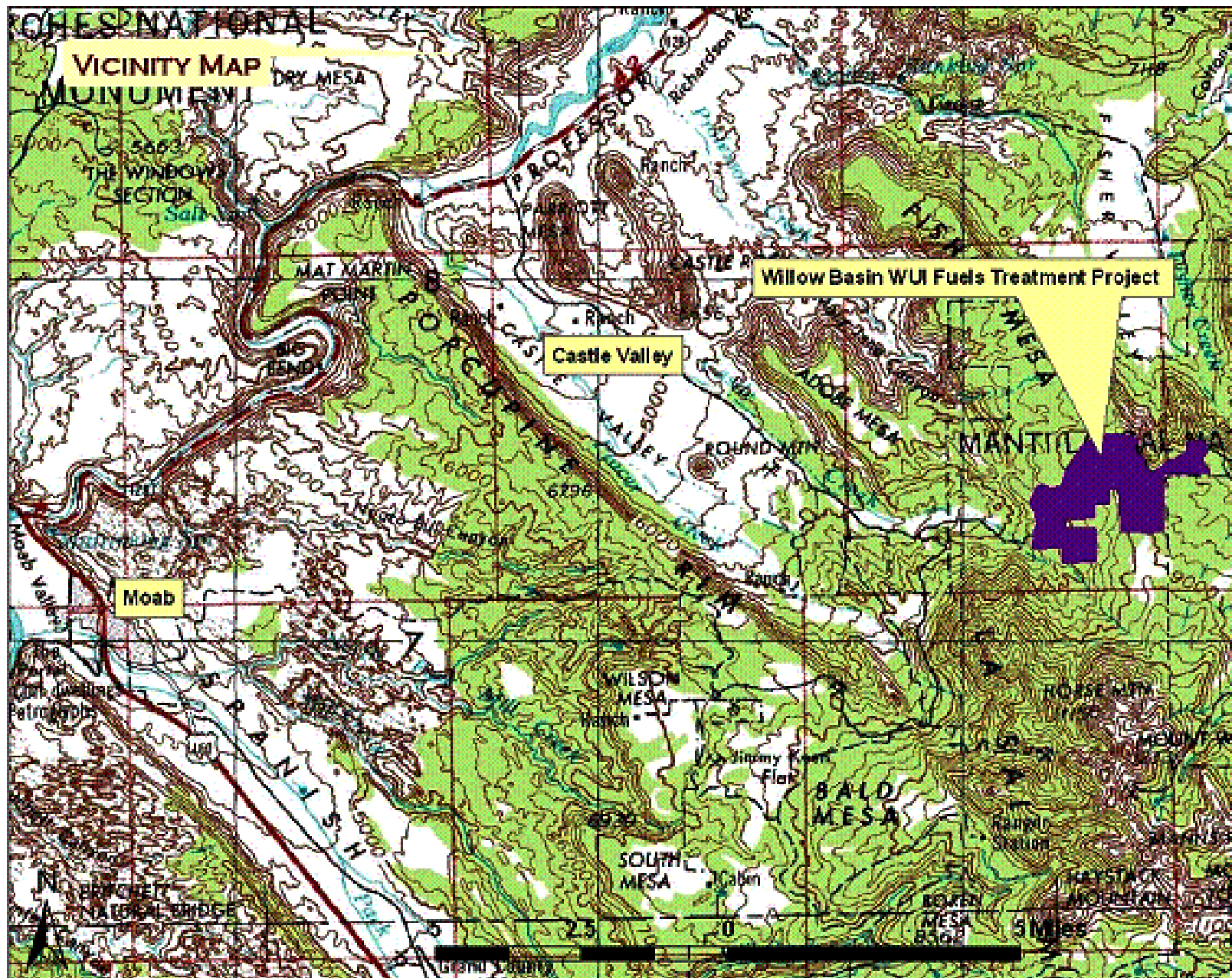
## PROPOSED FUNDING

Source	Amount Requested	Date Approved	Amount Approved
NWTF	\$6,000.00		\$0.00
USFS	\$12,000.00		\$0.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$18,000.00</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>

## PROPOSED BUDGET

Item	Description	DWR Account	In Kind/ Partner Contrib.
Personal Services	Mechanical, fire, and hand thinning of brush	\$6,000.00	\$0.00
Personal Services	Mechanical, fire, and hand thinning of brush	\$0.00	\$12,000.00
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$6,000.00</b>	<b>\$12,000.00</b>

**Project Map:**



WILLOW BASIN WUI FUELS TREATMENT PROJECT  
- 1725 ACRES WITHIN THE PROJECT BOUNDARY  
- 995 ACRES OF TREATMENT

